

“THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR”

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
“HOUSEHOLD WORDS”

No. 377. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1876.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

PHOEBE: GIRL AND WIFE.

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MRS. TILLOTSON,” &c. &c.

CHAPTER I. DIDO HOUSE.

DIDO HOUSE was the name of an important academy for young ladies, directed by the Misses Cooke.

It belonged to the class known as “finishing”—an epithet of terror for parents of contracted means. There were well-accredited instances of fashionable families despatching a whole series of daughters to receive the high-class instruction to be imparted at the academy, but who had been themselves “finished,” as regards their worldly means, by the enormous bills sent in by the presiding ladies. Indeed, as the “Newly-Rich” would put their sons in the Guards, not with a view of serving their country, but for the purpose of contracting intimacies with young men of rank and fashion, so were they equally zealous to receive admission in the household brigade commanded by the Misses Cooke, where opportunities of the same favourable kind were opened to the young ladies. Naturally, therefore, the purchase-money was high, the style of living costly, the extras of an appalling kind; and the Misses Cooke, having always a list of candidates waiting for vacancies, were able to make such demands as they chose. If dissatisfied or grumbling, parents and guardians were at liberty to remove their children, the principals rather plaintively conveying that they had been mistaken in their opinion of the poor and paltry persons who had thus imposed on them; and, in fine irony, mentioning other establishments which, they were certain, would be more suited

to the class of thing such parents were in search of.

Daughters of the nobility then, of leaders of fashion, children of the untitled aristocracy, of the great county families, of baronets and Members of Parliament gliding upwards to the Peerage—such were the clients the Misses Cooke sought to “finish.”

The principal herself had been finished at a great academy, and had officiated as governess to the Ladies Clara and Mary Draper, daughters of the Countess of Canonbury, who had, later, been finished successfully into a duchess and a marchioness respectively. This feat at once brought her reputation, and with some savings and borrowings, she founded her well-known establishment, situated close to Clapham, in fine bracing air. She was, of course, permitted to refer to the august ladies just named, who had a sort of regard for her; also to the Most Noble A., to her Grace of B., to the Right Hon. C., and to the Hon. and Rev. D. The establishment was successful to an extraordinary degree, if tested by some rather inappropriate fruits which one would have thought had but small connection with scholastic matters—namely, the “happy establishment of pupils in life,” as Miss Cooke phrased it. In this direction a certain “luck” attended the school; and, indeed, it often seemed not a little unfair to the principal, that these indirect matrimonial results should not be regularly affichéd in the testimonials, just as lists of honours, prizes in the Civil Service, &c., are set out proudly by the seminaries for young gentlemen. Still, the fact was well known in the proper quarters, and there was always a long list of candidates waiting until the Misses Cooke should be ready to receive them.

The establishment was conducted by Miss Cooke, principal, Miss Emma Cooke, an inferior sister, acting as what in an orchestra would be called *chef d'attaque*, or leader, only that she took the unusual duty of playing a little on every instrument, on the pupils, on "the parents and guardians"—always spoken of as a vast generality, as one would talk of "the poor," or "the people," or "the press." She was something like a chief of the staff, spurring about the field, and scarcely ever out of the saddle.

Miss Cooke herself, tall and meagre, correct in manner as well as in that limited amount of skin and flesh that well-worked ladies of fashion display, seemed never to grow older or ill, living behind a cloud, from behind which she only came on occasions of solemnity or to meet "the parents," in state. Emma Cooke was in the other extreme in all these points.

A stout German gentleman came three times a week to teach his language (an extra); a French professor to teach French (also extra); while the pianoforte, guitar, mathematics of a light kind, writing, history, singing, dancing, calisthenics on "Madame Beyer's elegant drawing-room system," with "taste and the art of dress," by a pupil of a great French man-milliner's—all these departments of knowledge were taught by special professors, and all, of course, on "extra" principles.

Some of the small-souled, discontented parents, who did not wish that their children should be grounded in these costly "extras," might fairly wonder what was the ordinary curriculum of the establishment, but they might be fairly reminded that it was "tone" that was imparted, and an indefinable air of fashionable grace that was to fit the young ladies for the sphere in which they were to move.

One of the most important of the extras was singing. Who does not know the charming little compositions of Mr. Canova, so graceful and tuneful, so easy, and yet conveying the idea of difficulty. Where could a pair of female voices glide and curl at equally-balanced intervals, like well-trained ponies, through music, as through one of Canova's duets? Every one of good degree sang his songs, and two or three of his more favourite melodies were an absolute little income to him. He directed Lady A.'s concerts, and the Duchess of B.'s matinée. He was always glad to call himself "Mr. Canova," eschewing the "Signor;" was of small size, but

graceful and dignified, with a black silky moustache and a tender, languishing voice.

Nearly every young lady in the establishment was, in process of finishing, under the care of this elegant maestro. What made him of special value to Miss Cooke was that he cultivated a rough and harsh manner, sometimes speaking with such a sharp severity that the young ladies came away from his presence in tears. Several he had absolutely declined to teach, and to one handsome girl he had applied the term "porca." There was a commotion in the house when formal complaint was made of this language: but Mr. Canova refused distinctly to retract or make any amende. He offered to resign. All the world was astonished to see how indulgently Miss Cooke treated the erring singing-master, the truth being, as observers of human nature might see, that this was a fault in the right extreme, the danger to establishments where young ladies of condition were educated arising from an undue courtesy.

She dealt with him like a mother, negotiating impartially between both sides, holding herself out as neutral; not a very difficult rôle, as she was supported by the pupils, who were all upon his side. Even the offended young lady herself was not very obdurate, and owned that she herself had been very provoking. With such dispositions on all sides, it was not very difficult to compose matters, and the fascinating Canova maintained his position.

Such was Dido House, a handsome country seat, deserving that common compliment of "standing in its own grounds" (mansions not usually standing in those belonging to other residences), luxuriously appointed with baths, music-rooms, gardens, swings, "appliances for promoting a graceful carriage, and moderately expanding the chest" (Madame Beyer's elegant drawing-room system, in fact), and offering every advantage for fitting young ladies of position and gentility to adorn "their future station in life." Such, too, was Miss Cooke, her system, and her school.

CHAPTER II. PHÆBE DAWSON.

THERE were among the pupils two particular young ladies, to whom the reader may now be introduced, being, as it were, called down to the "visitors' reception-room" for that purpose; for the whole course of events of this little story is des-

tined to circle about these figures. Adelaide Cross and Phoebe Dawson were their names.

They were nearly of the same age, one eighteen and the other sixteen years old. Phoebe was a refined, dainty little creature, with all the piquante dignity of a Chelsea-ware shepherdess, and from her earliest appearance before the public had a very finished and complete air in her bearing, her dress, and appearance.

She was, indeed, a delicately-wrought piece of workmanship, with dancing eyes, and a lip so sensitive and airy that it played like some magnetic instrument under every emotion. Did any one fix their eyes on her, even for a moment, her eyes and lips were in motion, until a smile or laugh of mischief broke out. Required to look grave—as she often was on occasions when confronted with clergymen and other officials—the most she could assume was a sort of roguish seriousness; but that so nicely balanced, that very second it seemed in peril of being overset, and a great scandal brought about. In the school annals there were several excesses recorded, on such awful occasions as when Dean Drinkwater came to give away the prizes, or deliver a lecture on religious morals in Passion Week. She was a high-bred little dame, her father (who was now dead) having been an officer of good connection. Her mother was a lady of condition and fashion, though not "well off," who "knew everybody," and was one of those favoured rovers who, without any special recommendation, are found a necessary evil or blessing, as the case may be, at country houses during festival times. She was indebted for these privileges to a pleasant air and manner of familiarity and self-confidence, as well as to a surprisingly intimate knowledge of family details and circumstances, which she always took care to keep posted up to the latest moment. She was as unaffected by rebuffs as was the ocean by Mrs. Partington's mop; rather, what was a rebuff for another lost its character when applied to her, and dissolved into a cloud of spray.

Mrs. Dawson was, in short, a power in the circle in which she moved, always apparently busily engaged, always in consultation with tall, elderly gentlemen of her connection, whom she amused or interested with her talk or stories, and who somehow respected her. She had been for years foraging skilfully over town and country in her own interest; and when

her daughter was "finished," intended to enter on a new field of operations suited to her genius, with a view to a good match for "My Phoebe," as she always called her. Indeed, had she been left without any provision, instead of that respectable portion—half settlement, half insurance, which she had warily effected, and caused her husband to keep up during his lifetime—she would have somehow contrived to live in convenience and comfort—resembling one of those vagrant cows, which the artful owner turns out to crop the stray patches of grass along the roadside, under the hedges, &c., and who thus graze at free quarters. Matters where serious outlay was involved did not come within the compass of her arrangements; it was therefore suspected—almost known for certain—among her friends, that the outlay for Phoebe's rather costly "finishing" came from some foreign source, or was defrayed in kind—the worthy lady acting like the useful agents to recruiting-sergeants who are known as "bringers." She was ever loud in her recommendation of the establishment to such families as had candidate daughters, dwelling on particular advantages and blessings, such as were not even known to the Misses Cooke themselves, and attracted the parents to an extraordinary degree. Yet, if she succeeded in placing her daughter at the seminary on such terms, she had art enough to make it assume the character of an obligation; and Phoebe herself always met with an appreciation equal to that enjoyed by any of the young titled maids, who received the benefit of all the extras.

This bright young girl seemed to reflect in her own person the two curious influences which distinguished her mother's character. As she walked, she unconsciously assumed a sort of patrician state, and, in a perfectly artless way, illustrated for her companions, in her own person, various notes and marks of high breeding—such as an arched sole of the foot, under which water might run as though under the arch of a bridge; a peculiar bone in the arm, "which all the Dawsons had"—and the rest. Yet, side by side with this dignity was a truly vagabond element, worthy of a little street Arab, for which pariahs and their antics she had the deepest sympathy and admiration. On this ground Miss Cooke had grave misgivings, and often reproved her pupil for the incurable "lowness" of her tastes. It must be added, also, that for grown-up

gentlemen of the scamp description Phoebe had the most good-natured tolerance; and when a "good" story was related of one of this class "doing" a tradesman by some ingenious trick, Phoebe's mouth and eyes, indifferent to the morality, showed how she sympathised with the cleverness and originality of the device.

She no doubt owed this sentiment to her affection for her brother, Tom Dawson, a deplorable specimen of the class—a young fellow who had "done" everybody, and certainly himself, since he had long since "done" with every shilling he had in the world. This young gentleman used to bewail his condition in never having any money "that he could call his own," although, indeed, he might fairly be indifferent to the enjoyment of any coming under that description, since he found it more simple to employ that of other people.

There was a number of young satellites, of inferior talent and spirit, who belonged to Phoebe's party, and whom she had influence enough to lead into any mischief, as captain. Long remembered was that awful, particular anniversary of Miss Cooke's birthday—always celebrated as a festival, so far as a genteel distribution of cake and glass of wine to each boarder went—but henceforth recorded in the departmental annals of the school as though attended by something akin to the horrors of the Commune. It was on that day that the Rev. Mr. Higgins, an obscure curate and connection of Miss Cooke's, who had not risen with her to any greatness, was privileged to come and dine, a duty, or pleasure, in which he never failed—it being assumed that he was to be the heir general of the principal, after Miss Emma Cooke's life-interest was exhausted.

On the morning, then, of this day, just before the young ladies went in to breakfast, Miss Emma Cooke was seen to rush to her greater sister's apartment—"the study"—gasping:

"The statue! the statue, sister! Oh! dreadful!"

This particular description was always applied to a tall, full-length model of the goddess Minerva, in plaster, which was placed at the top of the first landing, conspicuous to visitors, holding a gas jet and globe. There being only one specimen of this classic art on the premises, the expressions, "At the statue," "Close to the statue," were understood in the house as a topographical measure—much as one would

speak of "The Monument;" or, in lower circles, of "The Angel," or "The Elephant and Castle."

Visitors, parents, and guardians always caught sight of the goddess from the hall, and felt somehow impressed; and the goddess was, moreover, regarded with particular veneration, as the ground of influencing, even by material objects, the taste of the pupils—a grand principle in Miss Cooke's curriculum.

But what Miss Emma Cooke had to report in such agitation, was that the Minerva had been defaced!—that a scandalous outrage on the dignity of the statue had been committed.

The two ladies at once repaired to the second landing, and there saw but too plainly what had been done. A pair of black whiskers had been daubed on the figure; a black calico gown had been fitted to it; a pair—another pair—of garments, certainly not to be named, at least within the precincts of a correct young ladies' school, without the most delicate of circumlocutions—had been cleverly adapted to the limbs of the figure; while a cap and bands, of the proper clerical pattern, made up, not the likeness, but the suggestion, of the Rev. Mr. Higgins!

The two ladies were appalled. "This sort of thing" had been hitherto unknown; it was foreign to the character of the place. Once it got abroad that these vulgar excesses, which might be incident to the lot of common establishments, had infected the select shrine, it was all over with their prestige.

The same thought occurred to both the ladies—Send for Miss Dawson at once! Emma went down among the clustered young ladies, who were indeed waiting to know how the fun had been received, and walked straight to Phoebe, as a policeman would make for his prisoner. She said sternly:

"Miss Cooke desires to see you in the study."

Phoebe tossed her head, though the fine blood flushed into her cheeks, and followed with something of the prompt manner of the habitual offender, who, when he sees that "the game is up," surrenders, and gives no trouble. Once in the presence, she admitted her guilt.

"I begin to fear that you are utterly abandoned," said Miss Cooke awfully. "The fate before you makes me tremble. The distinction between right and wrong seems to be effaced in your breast."

Phoebe tried to be, or to look, penitent, and said that she "only did it for a piece of fun."

"Fun! Fun!" repeated Miss Cooke, even more shocked; "you call ridiculing all that is most reverend fun, do you? I declare it frightens, it appals me."

Miss Cooke uttered these generalities in a hard official manner, but when she entered on another view of the subject she became more excited.

"What am I to do with you? You are bringing disgrace on the establishment. You don't know how to behave like a lady. You are full of low, vulgar, middle-class ideas, which you did not learn here."

Phoebe's eyes began to sparkle.

"I am not vulgar. I am a lady, Miss Cooke; you know I am, and so is mamma. There are plenty of nice people among the middle-classes, are there not?"

"You have been brought up very badly, I fear."

"Not by her, Miss Cooke."

"You are not to answer in that free style. For the rest of this holiday, confine yourself to your chamber. You may be allowed to take a short walk at three o'clock, under charge of the matron, Mrs. Corbett. Your weekly money will be stopped for three weeks, and given to the Orphans' Home—not to defray the expense of repairing the statue."

"Statue!" said Phoebe, scornfully; "that plaster thing! Why, it's only a gas-lamp. I wish you could see the real statues we have at uncle's place!"

"This grows very serious," said Miss Cooke, colouring. "I shall write by the next post to your mother."

In a moment Phoebe was penitent and humble.

"No, no; don't do that, Miss Cooke," she said, "it will worry her."

"I shall write to your mother," repeated the lady principal, with stern emphasis. "I shall tell her that I am altogether unequal to the control of such persons as you, and that your tastes are hopelessly and incurably low."

Here Miss Cooke had the satisfaction of repeating, with effect, what had before failed, "And that you seem to have lost all reverence for things human and sacred."

Phoebe, not in the least affected by this picture of her degradation, could only beg that her mother would not be written to, promising amendment.

"I'll go and put the lamp—the statue, I mean—to rights, and make it quite nice:

and, I beg your pardon, indeed I do, Miss Cooke; and, if you like, put me on my knees during dinner, with the Boeotian medal on me. I won't mind it in the least. But don't—don't write to mamma."

Colouring excessively at this unconscious contempt for the severest moral punishment known to the school, viz., "the Boeotian medal," worn with a brown ribbon round the neck, supposed to enter like iron into the soul, and the stigma from which was supposed to be life-long, Miss Cooke waved her hand, and said, hoarsely, "Retire!"

Phoebe was at once delivered over to the secular power in the shape of the matron, to be conveyed away to what was known as the infirmary, where both the sick and the wicked were always confined. Seeing that her submission had produced no effect, she drew herself up, and, with a haughty look that made Miss Cooke a little uncomfortable, went to her fate.

This little incident has been dwelt on with a view to exhibit Phoebe's character. She was, indeed, a sore trouble to the lady principal; and yet she was not mutinous or insubordinate. She was a favourite in the house, and was ever regarded indulgently, was always "sorry" for her excesses, and promising amendment. There was a dash and adventure in her proceedings which redeemed them, and took them out of the category of school crimes, to say nothing of a pleasant air of comedy impossible to resist. For her excesses there was a general tenderness. They were of this kind.

When a stray donkey was noticed from the windows which overlooked the prison-like walks of the place, repairing regularly each morning to browse upon a choice piece of grass near the gate, who was it that planned a daring scheme for "cutting him out," and bringing him in by the side-gate, to be tied up in the shrubbery until recreation hour? Who, of course, but Phoebe! And when some vexatious spirit prompted Miss Cooke to take a stroll on the bowling-green—the most sequestered part of the garden—a thing she was never known to do, who was at the head of the procession that met her gaze? There, on a frisking and kicking donkey, attended by a crowd of screaming, laughing young ladies of the best blood in the Peerage, was seated Phoebe, controlling him as though he were some highly-mettled racer; her whole energies absorbed in the task, hands down, her hair tossing about her neck, and exe-

cutting, as it were, the task scientifically. So absorbed was she, indeed, that she was unconscious of the sudden desertion of her staff, who suddenly fled, and dived into the shrubberies.

It was not until she had all but ridden down the lady principal that Phoebe discovered the danger of her situation. What embarrassment followed, how it became dangerous to descend from the donkey's back, and that, too, under the terrible frown and speechless anger of Miss Cooke, may be conceived. Still, the want of dignity in the whole transaction, and the difficulty of going through the various judicial processes of solemn examination and severe reproof, made it impossible to deal with the matter as the high crime and misdemeanour it really was.

Again. People passing down the road to the west of the school were often puzzled by a large hoarding which rose above the unusually high wall, and which, unadorned by advertisements, seemed quite purposeless. For this unsightly screen, the cause of some expense to the lady principal, Phoebe alone was accountable. A row of high houses ran along the road, known as Maida Villas, from the roofs of which a commanding view of the gardens, bowling-green, &c., where the young ladies took exercise, might be obtained. The mere possibility of such a danger was not of much importance; unfortunately, it took concrete shape, the young ladies discovering that young gentlemen, with short pipes wedged firmly in their mouths, were framed in the windows during the hours of morning pastime, which they surveyed with stolid curiosity, until it was over.

This apparition caused quite a flutter among the seminary doves, though nuns could not have been more demure in their bearing. "He's looking at me;" "They are looking at you;" "No, he isn't;" "Yes, he is;" for one, more marked in his attentions than the rest, was soon distinguished. Such was the chatter, scarcely subdued, that prevailed. This observer, who was good-looking, was a subject of interest to the young maids; but the distance was great, and it was scarcely possible to make out a distinct inventory of his charms. His hair was pronounced to be of various conflicting shades; his eyes hazel, or of a bewitching blue or brown.

Mischief was in Phoebe's eyes. "Let us get the old telescope," she cried, "out of the hall!"

"Easy to say get it," said one—Bertha, "but you'd be afraid."

"I?" said Phoebe. "Not I! What fun it would be. How he would stare when he saw it pointed at him. I'd do it in a second. You don't think I am afraid?"

The telescope was procured, and put into Phoebe's hand. She recoiled from the rather unmaidenly act she had undertaken, but her spirit would carry her through. Her companions affected to continue their promenade all the while, stealing sly glances. Phoebe stood in the middle, the telescope resting against the trunk of a tree, her cheek beginning to flush. The whisper "She's afraid!" had caught her ear. The next moment one of the young ladies of Miss Cooke's highly-select academy was seen with her eye to the glass of a heavy astronomical telescope, pointed at a young gentleman seated afar off in a window. The glass was only pointed, for Phoebe was too flurried to see anything; but she carried out the little pantomime effectually. On this account she did not notice the gallant manner in which the compliment was received, the pipe being withdrawn, and the smoker, rising, and indulging in a number of smiles and bows, and even kissing his hand profusely.

For this reason, also, she could not notice the sound of approaching steps, or the apparition of Miss Emma Cooke—who was standing awfully beside her, looking with gasping wonder from the telescope to the attic, and from the attic to the telescope. Without speech or delay the offender was at once arrested, and led away to the presence of the civil power. A hurried court was held. The outrage was too heinous, and went to the very root of the institution.

The thing was so unprecedented that the powers knew not how to deal with it. Phoebe's readiness, however, saved her. He was, she urged, perpetually looking down at them. They could not walk in the garden without being stared at. They thought there was no harm in looking at him. This naïvely turning the offence into an act of self-defence puzzled Miss Cooke, and, at the same time, struck her as reasonable, and that there was, after all, some provocation.

Another girl might have been dealt with severely the following day, but Phoebe's luck did not desert her this time; and it was determined that that particular flank of the institution, always considered too much exposed for propriety, should be screened off. And the formidable hoarding was thus set up.

This again was a source of humiliation to Miss Cooke, who weekly received liberal proposals from advertising agents, offering to farm the same from her, and who could not be convinced that the structure had been erected for any other purpose but for one belonging to their profession. Still, her stoical firmness in declining did not profit her, as lawless persons went to great risks in climbing up, for the purpose of affixing notices of a low and even vulgar kind. The travelling circus never missed paying her this compliment, covering the hoarding during the night-time with equestrian ladies flying round the arena, and whose too gauzy skirts floated nebulously about their head and shoulders. This trial the lady principal had to accept; and for this trial the lively pupil was indirectly responsible.

Such was Phoebe, the gay, bright "tomboy" of the house. We now turn to her companion and friend, who was of a different nature.

A STRIKE IN THE UNITED STATES.

SABLE. On a field argent a coffin couchant, with the label, "Tis is your hous." Supporters, two shot guns proper, subverted. Crest, a revolver fumant.

"Notice you have Careid this as far as you can By cheating thy men you three Bosses be Carefull if the Above dont Be your home in a Short Time.

From a Stranger
he nowes you."

The above pleasant document was served upon the gentlemen referred to, not in Sheffield, in the old wicked days, nor in the realms of Captain Rock, but no longer than twelvemonths since, in the Keystone State of the Great Republic of the West.

It is, we may premise, entirely foreign to our present purpose to discuss the morality or policy of trade combinations, on the part of either employers or employed. Trades unions in this country received, some years since, the sanction of the legislature, and as they grew overwealthy and powerful, were met by associations of employers; who, when attacked singly, were powerless, but banded together, proved not unequal to the task of coping with organised bodies of workers. Power has at length been pretty evenly divided between master and man. For a while, the skilful tactics of the leaders of trades unions, striking first

against one employer, and then against another, maintaining meanwhile the men on strike from the earnings of those still at work, were attended by almost invariable success; but the associations of employers, by meeting this scheme of action by a general lock-out, have, at length, after several campaigns, inflicting great loss and suffering on both sides, brought about a better state of things. The high contracting powers have learned to respect each other, and boards of conciliation and arbitration have taught masters and workmen that time, money, and irritation may be avoided by an open discussion of the questions at issue. They know each other better than they did a few short years ago. Workmen have discovered that their employers are not mere arbitrary autocrats, making fortunes out of their thews and sinews, but men, without whose capital the thews and sinews before-mentioned would run a shrewd risk of standing idle, and who, by reason of their great fortune, can, if business be made too difficult, afford to forsake it altogether, and live on the interest of their capital. Masters, too, have found out that their workmen are not all of the stamp of the old-fashioned Sheffield unionists, whose doings were exposed a few years ago, but good honest fellows, whose anxiety to obtain a share of the good things of life is, if sometimes asserted with unnecessary violence, yet in the main reasonable enough.

This better tone has not been brought about an instant before it was required, as the supremacy of England in the iron and cotton markets of the world has recently been gravely threatened. Belgian iron has been, and is, largely imported into England. Ingots of Bessemer steel have been bought in England, carried abroad, worked up into railway material, and sold in this country at lower prices than those charged by our makers. American cotton goods find a ready sale in Manchester itself. These ominous circumstances apparently prove that in this country, during the last half-dozen years, the cost of production has, in certain departments of industry, outrun the rest of the world so far, that foreigners are prepared to struggle severely for a share of the trade, which we have hitherto considered our own.

Perhaps, at this critical moment, a glance at the relations of capital and labour in America may suggest some valuable reflections. In a new country, where work is plenty and labour scarce, wages naturally

range high. Artisans in America were accustomed for many years to receive higher wages than their European brethren; but, since the "late misunderstanding"—known in Europe as the greatest civil war of recent times—found themselves all at once remunerated beyond their wildest dreams. The platform "eight hours' work, eight hours' play, eight hours' sleep, and eight shillings a-day" was completely outgrown by several trades. Not very long ago stonemasons were earning twenty-four dollars a week—paper dollars of course, but, allowing for the difference between gold and currency, equal to four pounds sterling. Many other artisans were paid in proportion—the immense outbreak of the spirit of enterprise, on the conclusion of the war, having raised the value of labour to an unprecedented height. This state of things was too delightful to last long. Labour poured into the United States from other countries, and, as the market became glutted with thews and sinews, came the financial collapse, which showed on how narrow a basis of capital the tremendous superstructure of speculative work had been raised. Railways in the course of construction were abandoned, houses were left unfinished, cotton-mills were stopped, and blast furnaces blown out. Thousands of people were thrown out of employment; and many who had left this country, to improve their fortunes in America, were compelled to return home. Since this crisis, a very general reduction of wages has taken place all over the United States, accompanied, in many cases, by strikes, and by a species of resistance which recalls the worst days of trades-union outrages in this country, and the worst kind of oppression exercised by them; the tyranny of the workman over his fellow-man, relentlessly enforced and enhanced by all the devices of terrorism.

In the statement of the outrages perpetrated in the Schuylkill and Shamokin districts of Pennsylvania, made before a joint committee of the Legislature of that State, by Mr. Franklin B. Gowen on behalf of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company, and the Philadelphia and Reading Railway Company, there is no trace of irritation at trades unions as such. On the contrary, it is freely confessed that the United States is, par excellence, the country of trade combinations, between both manufacturers, traders, and workers in their several capacities. Railways, coal

and iron companies, accused of combining with other associations for the purpose of keeping up the price of freight and raw material, reply that they act exactly like other people. As the English reader is pretty well aware, the Great Republic is the country of all others where the principle of protecting native industry is most completely recognised, by the imposition of import duties so heavy in many cases as to be practically prohibitory. In nearly every sphere of industry this principle is asserted with more or less candour. Mr. Gowen's remarks, uttered before a tribunal abundantly capable of checking their correctness, are peculiarly instructive. "Every pound of rope that we buy for our vessels or our mines, is bought at a price fixed by a committee representing the rope manufacturers of the United States. Every keg of nails we buy, every paper of tacks we buy, is bought at a price fixed by the representatives of those who make the articles. Screws, and wrenches, and hinges are bought and sold exactly in the same way. We never buy a boiler-flue for our locomotives that is not bought at the trade price fixed by the representatives of the mills that manufactured it. An iron beam for your houses or your bridges is never bought, except at a price agreed upon by a combination of those who produce it. With gas-pipe it is exactly the same. With fire-brick it is exactly the same. Every piece of terracotta pipe for drainage, every keg of powder we buy, to blast the coal we mine, is bought under the same arrangement. Every pane of window-glass in this house was bought at a scale of prices established exactly in the same manner. White lead, galvanised sheet iron, hose and belting, files, and numerous other articles of commerce, are bought and sold at rates determined in the same way. When my friend, Mr. Lane, was called upon to begin his speech the other day, and wanted to delay because his stenographer had not arrived, and I asked Mr. Collins, the stenographer of the committee, if he would not act, he said no—it was against the rule of the committee of stenographers; he could not do it. I said, 'Well, Mr. Collins, I will pay you anything you ask; I want to get off, and would rather pay you myself than delay.' 'Oh!' said he, 'prices are established by our combination, and I cannot change them.'"

After such an exposition as this of the length to which trade combination is car-

ried in "the States," it would have been absurd to inveigh against coal-miners for combining like everybody else, the only complaint against them being that they have preserved among them all the old traditions of "rattening," and visit the "blackleg" or "knobstick," who submits to reduced wages without the permission of his fellows, with cruel punishment. From the evidence adduced, it would appear that the will of the rattener is not invariably that of the general body of workers, but is often imposed upon them by a bold and active, but numerically small, minority. The outrages which were perpetrated in the Schuylkill and Shamokin region, between December, 1874, and July, 1875, do not appear, as a rule, to have been intended to injure the property of the employer, but to have been aimed at the working-men who wanted to work, and who, being in a free country, possibly imagined themselves free to work for any price they could obtain, rather than remain idle. They soon found out their mistake. At the Ben Franklin Colliery the men had accepted reduced wages early in the season, and were working peacefully and contentedly, when the "breaker" was burned by an incendiary. The destruction of the owner's property was merely incidental, the main purpose being to prevent the men from earning their daily bread. At the time when this object was effected, by the burning of the structure in which they were employed, the lowest-paid miner on the list earned sixty dollars a month, and the highest, a hundred and thirty dollars. At another colliery, within five or six miles of the "Ben Franklin," a band of twenty or thirty men, in the evening—almost in broad daylight—went to the breaker, drove the men away by force, and burnt the structure down. It belonged to a poor man who had invested his savings in a single colliery, and was probably ruined by the fire; while his workpeople were thrown out of employment, with little or no chance of getting fresh work. The method of getting together the necessary force, for a high-handed proceeding like that just cited, is peculiar. A little band of ten or a dozen determined men form themselves into a species of press-gang, and starting, armed of course, through a mining village, will force every man they meet to join them, as the pirates of olden times re-manned their ships with sailors whom they had taken prisoners. In this way sufficient numbers are soon col-

lected to overawe any unprepared body of workmen. Once the ratteners met their match. On this solitary occasion the proprietors got notice of an intended attack, and placed twenty-five armed men around the mines, to protect their brethren who were working. The defending party were armed with navy revolvers, and behind them stood men with sixteen-shooting carbines, to hand to them when their revolvers were exhausted. For five hours that little band of determined men faced a howling rabble of five hundred, and so efficiently protected the colliery that work went on as if nothing had happened. Shortly after this event the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company were compelled to conduct their business in the mining region under an armed force. Every passenger-train that passed over the road was preceded by an engine with an armed posse. The locomotive engineer—foremost at his duty and unflinching at the post of danger—stood with his left hand on the throttle-valve, and his right upon a pistol, as the train passed through dark glades or by deep defiles, where every tree and every rock concealed an armed assassin. Men, armed to the teeth, were sent to protect their fellow-men in the right to labour; and this police force had to be lowered and passed down inclined planes where the human freight is supported by a wire rope. At a time when a number of those officers were about to descend an inclined plane, it was found that some cowardly rattener had cut the wire rope with an axe in three or four places—not so deeply that the danger should be discerned by the eye, but rather that it should be hidden until the strain was upon it. By a fortunate accident this infamous piece of work was discovered in time to avert a terrible calamity. A certain ghastly variety is discernible in these trade outrages, occasionally relieved by an infusion of highway robbery and burglary. Watchmen were frequently beaten and plundered; telegraph offices burnt; loaded cars moved on to the railway track, and the company's servants stoned; warehouses broken open and plundered; coal-trains were stopped and seized, and the railwaymen fired at; switch locks broken and switches misplaced; caution-boards torn down; tool houses broken into and plundered; stones and logs placed on the line. On the 3rd of June a grand demonstration was made. About a thousand men made

their appearance in the neighbourhood of Mahanoy City, and stopped the men working at several collieries. About noon on the same day, a band of some twelve hundred men from Shenandoah, and other localities, marched through the city, wounding the policemen, and "raising Cain" generally. At night an attempt was made to throw the night passenger train to Shenandoah off the rails, by putting down stones on the track, but the villainous trick was discovered in time to prevent injury. The day's entertainment was finally brought to a close by an adjournment to a colliery near Mount Carmel, where the breaker was solemnly burnt, the rioters standing round the fire till it was consumed. A few days later two contractors at the Oakdale colliery left the mines, to return to Forestville, their residence. As they were crossing the mountain between Oakdale and Forestville, they were fired upon by three men, armed with shot-guns, and were both severely wounded. Several other men were fired at, and Frank Yost, of the Tamaqua police, was shot by two men in Tamaqua, as he was on a ladder at a lamp-post, turning off the gas, and died the next morning.

It is only fair to the ratteners and assassins who perpetrated these monstrous deeds, to mention that they seldom killed or injured a man without giving him what they imagined to be fair warning.

The notice quoted at the head of this paper is a specimen of the decorated style employed in addressing a "boss." Working men were talked to in very similar language, but less graphic power was expended upon them.

A general intimation was conveyed in this style: "Now men i have warented ye before and i willnt warind you no mor—but i will gwrintee you the will be the report of the revolver." The signature to this significant hint is a roughly-drawn sketch of the weapon referred to. Another document of the same kind is "signed at the top" with a pistol and a coffin, and proceeds in due form: "Notice is here given to you men the first and last Notice that you will get for no man to go Down this slope. After to Night if you Do you Can Bring your Coffion Along With you. Drift man stop at home and Cut no more Coal let him go and get Coal himself. I Dont mean Engineer or firemans let them mine there one Work now men the Next Notice you Will get I Dont mean to Do it With my Pen I Will Do it With that

there Rolver I Dont Want no more Black legs at this Collary."

A quaint specimen runs thus:

"NOTICE.

"Any blackleg that takes a Union Man's job while He is standing for His Rights will have a hard Road to travel and if He don't he will have to Suffer the consequences."

(Here follows a sketch of a dead man in a coffin.)

(Signed) "BEACHER AND TILTON."

At Locust Summit on March 31st, 1875, was found posted the following:

"NOTICE.

"Mr. Black-legs if you don't leave in 2 days time you meet your doom there will Bee an open war—imeateatly—."

Among others notified to leave was poor Yost, who was told "to take a warning to save his life;" and so far as can be ascertained, the scoundrels who threatened generally contrived to carry their threats into execution. The record altogether conveys a very bad impression of the mining population of Schuylkill and Shamokin. Nevertheless, although we may hug ourselves here in England on the comforting fact that the tremendous reductions made during the past eighteen months in the wages of coal and iron-workers have been carried out without exciting a solitary trade outrage, and—sundry strikes and lock-outs to the contrary notwithstanding—have been for the greater part managed with excellent temper on both sides, we should yet remember that not many years have elapsed since similar villainy was connived at in our own industrial centres. In justice to our American cousins it must also be admitted that the proportion of "native-born citizens" among the miners of Pennsylvania is by no means large.

KEANE MALCOMBE'S PUPIL.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

"AND what is Mrs. Vandaleur like?" asks Donald, lounging lazily at my feet, as I sit working, or rather trying to work, in the big bay window. It is a very difficult thing to make much progress with a piece of embroidery, when first your cotton, and then your thimble is abstracted, and you are held prisoner while a spray of climbing rose is pulled in through the window, and fastened artistically in your

hair; nor are matters mended when your long strip of work is taken from you, fastened into the form of a Greek cap, and perched upon a mass of black wavy hair, while two saucy eyes look laughingly up at you, and request an immediate opinion as to the becoming character of the "coiffure."

But to return to Donald's question.

"What is Mrs. Vandaleur like?"

"Mrs. Vandaleur is a widow—a short, plump, fair woman, with a round face, and little pudgy, white, helpless-looking hands. She lives in a cottage that she calls her 'little place,' and has a daughter whom she calls her 'little girl.' There is a croquet-ground, you know; and she gives entertainments which she calls 'little gatherings.'"

"What of the little girl?" Donald asks, when I pause for breath.

"Well, she isn't really a little girl at all: she's a grown-up young lady—and such a beauty!"

"Like a shepherdess, I suppose, Mab, only with no crook and no sheep; or a dear, darling waxdoll, from the Lowther Arcade, with china blue eyes, and fluffy golden hair all frizzed down to her eyebrows. I hate such women!"

"Maud Vandaleur is not a bit like a doll," I reply; "she's very pretty, and ever so clever; and I should like her really very much—only—"

"Only what?" says Donald, lying down full length upon the floor, and leaning on one elbow, while he looks up at me, and throws back the hair from his brow.

"Only her mother talks of her, and for her, and so one gets rather sick of 'my little girl.' Do you think me very ill-natured, Donald?" And I bend down, and touch tenderly the dark head that I love so well.

"Ill-natured, my darling!"

And I find this is not safe ground, for Donald's manner of expressing his opinion on the point is demonstrative. However, at length we return to our "moutons," mother and lambkin.

"So the old boy is dead?" By this disrespectful term he designates the late lamented Major Vandaleur.

"Indeed, I only wonder that he lived so long!" And then the spirit of mischief enters into and takes possession of me. I make myself look as stout and puffy as I can, I blink my eyes like a dazzled cat, and cast them up to the ceiling; throw out my hands in a sort of helpless appeal to man-

kind in general, and speak in an affectedly piteous voice: "Only five short years of happiness were vouchsafed to me—it was my little all, my happy time. And then I was left—I and my little girl—to face the world together!"

A shout of laughter from Donald almost drowns the sound of a timid tap at the door. A soft cooing voice says, "May I come in, dear Mabel?" A tiny bonnet, all tulle and forget-me-nots, surrounding a fair fat face, is insinuatingly looking round the open door, and there—oh, cruel fate!—stands the affectionate relict of the departed Vandaleur!

Donald scrambles to his feet, looking anything but steeped in bliss at the sight of so charming an apparition.

"Oh, don't move!" cries the little lady, holding out two fat hands, so tightly encased in lavender kid that they look like lavender pincushions.

"It's so interesting! quite an idyl, you know! You must forgive me for disturbing you, but when I arrived at The Cottage last night, I heard the happy news; and I am so delighted to meet Mr. Forsythe quite sans façon, you know. I would not let Nannie announce me, for really I can't feel like a stranger, and you must not try to make me one!"

This last is said with sweet infantine playfulness, and a fat tight lavender finger held archly up at Donald. Nothing ever disturbs his quiet self-possession, and he returns her greeting with the utmost courtesy, and then excuses himself for quitting her society, on the plea of an engagement at Abbeylands.

"My dear Mr. Forsythe, don't apologise! A good son, you know, Mabel, makes a good— But, never mind, I'll spare your blushes; and now let us sit down, and have a cosy chat—a 'coserie,' as they say in dear Paris."

I listen to Donald whistling softly as he goes down the avenue, I hear the click of the gate, and wish that Mrs. Vandaleur had seen fit to remain on that particular morning at her "little place." I even find myself beginning to wonder when she will go. But she has no idea of departing, for she nestles, like a stout sleek robin, into the corner of the wide, comfortable window-seat, and begins to peel her hands of their lavender covering—no other or more elegant word adequately describes the operation.

"Go on with your work," says the pigeon-like voice; "I can talk quite as

well while you do so. You are wondering where Maud is, I know."

I have never even thought of Maud, and, not being an adept at prevarication, am silent.

"Well"—smoothing out her small gloves upon her knee—"she's coming up next week. The Mainwarings have tried their best to persuade her to remain with them all the summer; but, dear, sweet child, she said she could not bring herself to leave her dear little mamma all alone, and so she is to follow me as soon as they will spare her."

I don't think eloquence is my forte, for I only say "Yes" in reply. And straightway Mrs. Vandaleur rallies me upon my preoccupation.

"Ah!" she says, with a stout, comfortable sigh, "I know what it is, my dear. No need to fear a want of sympathy from me. Indeed, when I came in, just now, I was sadly, sadly reminded of—But, no, we'll not speak of past days; it does not do to dwell upon my happy time!"

Now, I have seen the late Major Vandaleur's portrait, and it is that of a stout, red-faced man, with a big, shaggy moustache, and a snub nose; and the idea of slender, dark-haired Donald reminding anyone of him is almost too much for my gravity, so I look steadily out of the window; but my attention is soon reclaimed.

"I hope, dear Mabel (such a sweet name!) that you are taking a step in life that will be for your happiness. Marriage is such a lottery; and it would be affectation on my part to affect not to know that you have some years' more experience of life than Mr. Forsythe. Still, dear, I say, do not let that trouble you; don't have misgivings. As I was saying, just now, to your Aunt Janet, whom I met in the Long-lane, such marriages often do turn out happily. Why, there was a captain's wife in my dear husband's old regiment—"

But I know of old, that if Mrs. Vandaleur drifts into reminiscences of the "old regiment," the task of bringing her back is a Sisyphean one; and besides, my heart is beating fast and my hands are growing cold, so I say, "Mrs. Vandaleur, I am sorry you said that to auntie; she has been very happy about Donald, and she is getting old, and has not been as strong and well as usual—" But my companion interrupts me.

"Very natural, very proper, very considerate." And the fat white hand is laid on mine, and gives me a horrid little

squeeze that freezes my blood. "Your aunt is, as you say, getting on in life, and is, of course, happy to think you have found a protector; and, as I told her, there is less cause for anxiety in your case than there would be in almost any other similar one, for you very thin—pardon me, dear, I should say very slight—women have such an advantage over us; you look young, so much longer; and then, you have never had any colour to lose. Why, my little girl, with her wild-rose bloom, will look old—absolutely old—at thirty. I really think, Mabel, nobody, to look at you, would take you for more than one or two-and-twenty!"

She says this with her head on one side, like a contemplative bird. I bend low over my work, and try to guide my needle steadily. I feel goaded on to blurt out the truth:

"I was thirty this spring, Mrs. Vandaleur; but if Donald is satisfied, and Mrs. Forsythe—" But here I choke; for suddenly, like a revelation, comes back to me the remembrance of the cloud on that dear beautiful face as I drew it down to mine, and now, for the first time, its meaning comes over me.

The hard, bright, all-seeing eyes are on my face, and hold me like a vice, I feel them read me through and through; they take hold of the dark misgiving at my heart, and drag it into light.

"My dear," coos the maddening voice, "Mrs. Forsythe is a mother, and naturally feels as a mother; and we who have passed through the ordeal of married life know how great a risk disparity of years may turn out to be. I say may, because this seems almost an exceptional case. You may rely upon me, Mabel, as your friend; have no misgiving. I, my dear girl, will reassure Mrs. Forsythe's mind—I will plead your cause. I will, carelessly, as it were, speak of that captain's wife in my dear husband's late regiment—"

But the trodden worm will turn at last; and with all my heart in my voice I beseech her not to speak of me to Donald's mother. My very earnestness betrays the echo her words find in my own heart. She assures me she is "not at all angry at my distrust;" it is "very natural," "very sweet of me," to be so uncertain of my own attractions; and I begin to feel as though I were being smothered in black tulle and blue forget-me-nots, and as if there was no escape.

"Unwittingly—Mabel, you must know

it has been unwittingly—I have touched a sore place, and believe me, dear girl, when I say that this confidence shall be held most sacred."

What confidence? I have given none—nay, have none to give! I am getting bewildered, and a sudden pang of pity and sympathy comes over me for a poor fly, with green gauze wings, struggling in the web of a stout spider, in the corner of the rose-wreathed mullion outside. I think I know how he is thinking of the scented sunshine by the river, down among the meadows, and how nice it was to float about from flower to tree, where there were no spiders who spun nasty sticky webs, that it is so much easier to get into, than out of! Welcome indeed to me is a slow, uncertain footstep on the stair, and the sound of Aunt Janet's voice calling me.

With a sense of unutterable relief I spring up and open the door, totally ignoring a confidential look of secret understanding from Mrs. Vandaleur as I pass her. It seems to me I have never felt so tenderly towards that prim old face, and the straight up-and-down figure, with its faded green-plaid cloak, as now, when Aunt Janet comes in from her long walk, looking tired and jaded, and as much astonished as her even, quiet manner will allow, at my unwonted warmth of greeting.

Mrs. Vandaleur rises, and flutters all her draperies, like a hen rustling her feathers, as she says, "Mabel and I have been having a nice cosy chat, Miss Fraser, and time has passed so quickly, I have stayed longer than I intended."

"It was kind of you," answers Aunt Janet, "to call on Mabel so soon; and I'm sure she thinks greatly of it. I met the lad Donald in the lane some while ago, and he told me you were here; but I had to go and see Mistress Malcombe, who's not at all so well as I could wish, and that delayed me."

It soon appears that Mrs. Vandaleur has not only come to offer her congratulations to me on my betrothal, but also to inform us that on that day week she is to have a "little gathering" at The Cottage, and to bespeak the pleasure of our company on that occasion. We were accustomed to be bidden to two or three of these entertainments, during the time of Mrs. Vandaleur's yearly stay in Scotland; but now, the presence of Mrs. Forsythe at Abbeylands, and the advent of the young heir, made things in general of a more important and festive character than usual; and Aunt Janet gave

me a little knowing nod and smile, which I knew conveyed a certain content in her own mind on the subject of the "new gown."

Talking all the way downstairs with much volubility, and even lingering on the door-step, to give a long explanation of Mand's present and future proceedings, and her expected appearance on the horizon of our village, Mrs. Vandaleur at length—I may say at great length—departs; and when I would make my escape to my own room, and think quietly over the new source of pain planted in my heart, auntie calls for a consultation on the subject of the neglected cap.

This important article of her attire is duly finished, long before the day of festivity comes round; but Aunt Janet, at the last moment, declares herself unequal to the exertion of going, and so it comes about that I have to go alone.

It is strange to me to notice these sudden prostrations of strength in one who had always scorned the idea of people "giving way," and been, I often thought, rather hard upon those who were "always ailing—one day well, and another ill; just thrifless bodies, no much good to anyone." I have begun to do by stealth little services for her that have become a matter of course, and yet more than anything else surprise me, and tell of some strange change in her; for her scorn of "people who let themselves be waited on and faddled after" is proverbial.

So I start for Mrs. Vandaleur's "little gathering," with some undefined anxiety clouding my anticipations of pleasure, as I take my seat in a curious sort of conveyance, which is our usual mode of locomotion on state occasions. It is a sort of light cart, that seems struggling to turn itself into a phaeton, and is drawn by a white pony with stiff legs, and a habit of whisking his tail grandly from side to side upon the most trifling application of the whip, without in the smallest degree accelerating his pace.

My Jehu is an old and trusty retainer of the house of Fraser, and seems to have undergone no visible change, in age or appearance, since my advent at White-gates, more than twenty years ago.

It would have been natural enough for me to go with Donald and his mother in the grand Abbeylands carriage, but I had discovered, very shortly after my betrothal, that Aunt Janet was keenly sensitive on the point of being set aside, or "put past," as she expressed it, under this new phase

of my life, and so I adhered closely to all the old-fashioned ways.

We jolt along over the country roads, our progress being sure but not swift; for though the whisking of the white pony's tail makes a very fine and spirited appearance, it does not materially add to our speed; and most of Mrs. Vandaleur's guests have arrived by the time I reach The Cottage.

When I come downstairs, after having doffed my shawl and dust-veil, the two pretty drawing-rooms are empty, the sound of gay voices comes in from the garden, and I set off to make my way thither, when the daughter of the home appears in sight, and I stand a moment to gaze upon a fair picture.

It is two years since I have seen Maud, and she has grown in beauty.

To-day she is dressed to perfection in a blue and white cloudy dress, made with all those countless puffs and furbelows just come into fashion; and this is looped up so as just, and just only, to show two tiny high-heeled shoes with glittering buckles. Her sunny hair is raised high upon her shapely head, and thence drops down in long shining plaits, woven in and out in wonderful golden tracery; and a small sailor hat of delicate white straw crowns the whole, and gives depth and shadow to a pair of the sweetest blue eyes ever man gazed into to his own undoing. If her figure, to a thoughtful mind, foreshadows dreadful possibilities of developing one day into somewhat of the dumpling order, one can hardly find fault with its full soft curves now; and the waist, bound by a broad blue ribbon, is slender enough to be graceful without any horrible compression. This lovely piquante beauty, like some fine specimen of Sèvres china, greets my not particularly delighted gaze, as I stand unnoticed at the open French window leading to Mrs. Vandaleur's "little garden," and I hear the voice of my hostess say:

"You do not know my little girl yet, I think, Mr. Forsythe? Maud, dearest, this is Donald Forsythe. I cannot make a stranger of you!" turning to my Donald with the old appealing gesture.

And Donald stands there, bareheaded in the summer sunshine, before that fresh young beauty.

At this juncture Mrs. Vandaleur catches sight of me, and hurries forward. "Forgive me, Mabel," she says, "I did not see you. You have not been here long,

I hope? Such a lovely day we have for our little gathering! And it is too charming to think dear Mrs. Forsythe has at last been induced to leave the seclusion of Abbeylands!"

I glance in the direction she indicates, and there is my friend, seated on a garden-bench, and Maud, who has moved away, is stooping to place a rug beneath her feet, while Donald stands by, well pleased at the thought for her comfort.

The picture is perfect in every way. My plain grey dress, fresh and new as it is, and enlivened by a bunch of soft pink roses, grows suddenly dowdy, and finds no favour in my eyes; but my darling turns, and sees me, and comes rapidly across the lawn, glad welcome in his eyes and on his lips. The sun shines more brightly, the grey dress recovers its prestige in my imagination, and I look at my enemy's fat face, and smile with defiance in my heart and urbanity in my face.

"My enemy!" Yes, it has come to this—I have acknowledged to myself that she is that to me.

A croquet set is organised, and as I do not play that interesting game, I declare my intention of going over to Mrs. Forsythe, where Maud is still smiling under the shadow of the little sailor hat.

"You play, I am sure, Mr. Forsythe?" says our hostess; "and Mabel will spare you for a little while—won't you, dear?" turning to me insinuatingly.

But my hand is drawn through his arm.

"I don't know about Mabel sparing me, Mrs. Vandaleur, but I can't spare myself, for I'm not fond of croquet, and surely you have plenty of players already—" "You look tired," he says to me then; "come and sit by my mother in the shade."

So we saunter across the soft elastic turf, and I greet Maud, and she smiles, and is quite gushing in her greeting to me; and then the croquet-players claim her, and I sit beside Mrs. Forsythe, while Donald lounges at my feet.

Surely never was so fair a summer's day, such scented flowers, such sweet bird-songs from every tree!

But presently our hostess floats across to us, like a stout blue cloud, for Maud and her "little mamma" are always dressed in the same fashion.

"Fancy," she says, clasping her hands ecstatically, "Mr. Malcombe is actually coming here this evening! Isn't it too delightful?"

This is such an unwonted piece of dissipation on the part of my master, that we all laugh, and Mrs. Forsythe says :

" You work wonders, Mrs. Vandaleur, indeed you do."

" How sweet of you to say so ! " she answers. " Have you really room ? " for I have moved to give her a place beside us, and Donald has risen to his feet.

Pretty trills of girlish laughter come from the croquet party, for this " little gathering " at The Cottage has brought together many young people from far and near, and Maud's is not the only fair face here to-day—but yet the fairest; there can be no halting between two opinions on that point. Once Mrs. Forsythe turns to our hostess, and says :

" Your daughter is very lovely."

Mrs. Vandaleur dimples all over, and clasps her restless hands in ecstasy.

" Oh, Mrs. Forsythe, if you knew what that girl's heart is ! her beauty is her least attraction ! so unselfish ! so affectionately considerate for me ! I have, indeed, reason to be thankful. I often think, if her poor father could have lived to see—But I must not let myself dwell upon such thoughts. How delightful it is to see young people enjoying themselves—don't you think so ? "

This is said pointedly to me.

Nothing can be more deliciously suave than the voice and words, nothing more sweet than the smile with which the words are said; and yet I feel the colour rising to my face, and there is a sharp pain at my heart. But no one heeds me, for the croquet has come to an end, and we all adjourn to the drawing-room, and drink tea and eat cakes and ices. And then Keane Malcombe's tall lank figure appears at the door, and he is led by Mrs. Vandaleur down the rooms, in a sort of triumphal march. My dear old master—so simple-mannered, yet so full of gentle breeding—greets all the guests kindly, and yet (or so it seems to me) interposes a certain quiet dignity between himself and the effusiveness of his hostess. Soon the fading light outside is made to seem dimmer still by wax-lights, here, and there, and everywhere; our hats and bonnets are discarded, and the sound of the piano in the inner room is heard.

Rather feebly heard, truth to say, for a young lady kindly favours us with what she calls a " piece." Some one has volunteered to turn over; and Donald informs me, sotto voce, that he longs to fill that

office himself, and turn over " two leaves at a time."

At length, with a faint twiddling in the treble, and a thump in the bass, the " piece " comes to an end, and the company utter many " thanks," perhaps for the cessation.

I am well content, for my own part, sitting by the open window, where diamond stars are shining in an opal sky, and Donald's dark head bending down very near me.

There is a general buzz of conversation, and I catch rather a weary expression on my master's face, and feel that he is wishing himself by " Lizzie's " bedside, and in the quiet study with his books and flowers, when the first notes of music worth the calling so come floating down from the upper end of the room, and my master's face lights up eagerly, while Donald stops short in the middle of a sentence, and looks towards the spot where a graceful figure in cloudy blue is seated at the piano.

Since that night, in my many wanderings in many lands, I have heard an endless variety of music and musicians; but I have never heard anything more beautiful than Maud Vandaleur's playing. There is no " turning over " to be done, no notes to be followed by an agonised eye that fears to " lose the place," no lurching about from side to side like a ship in distress; the white hands rest a moment on the keys, like birds poising themselves for flight; and then the stream of melody rises and falls, and melts from one key to another; soft, low, sad minors seem to speak with a voice that has almost words, and tears stand in my eyes, and blur the shining of the stars as I listen.

Deep down in my heart, amid all this beauty of sound, rises a strange passionate protest against some new sorrow coming into my life, something that those sweet notes herald in—and I look up to see Donald bending eagerly down to the beautiful pianist, and catch the gleam of the lights upon her golden hair !

SOME STRANGE REPORTS.

SAVING half-a-dozen colonial exceptions, legislative bodies, all the world over, take pains to secure for their proceedings present publicity and permanent record; but whenever it has been suggested that our own Parliament would do well to imitate its younger sisters, and adopt a system of official reporting, the suggestion has been so coldly received, as to prove, if proof

were wanted, that our public men are quite satisfied to leave well alone, and rest themselves contented with the gratuitous services of the press.

Assuredly they are in the right, even though reporters, not being infallible, do sometimes, with or without the printer's aid, make them say strange things. When the Artizans Dwellings Bill was in debate, its introducer was reported to have informed the House of Commons that "in Liverpool, when they found three or four rows of horses running down so many courts, they pulled down the middle row, and left the space open;" and also to have laid it down that "by good management, and providing proper currents of air, you may induce the population to turn out." After the bill became law, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking at the Lord Mayor's Dinner, was said to have expressed the hope, that in a few years' time the metropolitan authorities would be able to boast they had "cleared away all those great aggregations of politics, those plague-spots which were a curse and a disgrace to the city!" Of course, the Home Secretary had talked of rows of houses, and asserted that "by good management you may induce the population to turn out; and by widening the streets, and providing proper currents of air, change the whole character of a district;" while his colleague anticipated the dispersion of aggregations of people. Lord Carnarvon, if parliamentary reports may be believed, announced, without exciting the slightest sensation, that "a new ordinance" had been prepared, to ensure the more efficient protection of the coolies employed in the colonies; but we may take it for granted that Woolwich knows nothing of the matter. When Lord Salisbury declared his belief in the prize-winners of the Indian Civil Engineering College doing honour to their profession, we cannot imagine him adding, "and this is no doubt due to the preponderance of hops;" nor, although Mr. Gladstone was made to stand sponsor to the story, is it credible that a great artist averred of a lady of very high rank, that "if she had had a proper amount of technical construction," she would have been the first painter in the land. As readily may we believe in a defender of the militia calling it "that constitutional farce;" in an election orator landing his candidate as a man having a greater stake in the country than "mere potatoes;" in a political leader telling his opponents, "You can't fight against the

future. Tim is on our side!" or, on a Member of Parliament complaining that "even small-pox has its defence associations with vigilant committee breeches;" and when an evangelical clergyman edifies his flock with a sermon on the immortality of horse-racing, we may hope to see Sir Wilfred Lawson officiating as M.C. at a Licensed Victuallers' Ball, and look for the publication of Whalley's *Vindication of Loyola*, with a dedication to the French ultramontanist, who described the representative of Peterborough as "a maniac who has acquired a certain notoriety solely by his love of eating priests and his enthusiasm for the false Tichborne."

According to a morning paper's account of the doings of Convocation in 1875, certain petitioners were so badly posted in chronology as to assert that the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth ended on the 29th of January, 1848-9; and a resolution was proposed, running: "In the saying or singing of matins and evensong, baptisms and burials, the ministers in parish churches, and chapels annexed to the same, shall use a surplus." For the one mistake probably the printer was answerable; for the other, he must be held blameless. Shorthand makes no difference between "surplice" and "surplus;" and the reporter blundered, through paying no heed to the context, in transcribing his shorthand into longhand. The similarity in the phonographic signs for gr and cr, betrayed a reporter into representing a speaker as accusing the English Church of making greed its first care; whereas he merely observed, that the Church made creed its first care, and education a secondary matter. No typographical casualty, no stenographic slip of the pen, can extenuate the transformation of "Mr. Disraeli, who towers above the rest of the Government like a giant among pygmies," into "Mr. Disraeli, before whom the rest of the Government quail like whipped hounds before their master;" or the turning of "the true meaning of civilisation is the extension of civil rights," into "the true meaning of civilisation is the extension of the circulation of the Echo;" while the bungling of the note-taker at the Dramatic Fund Dinner, who was so lost to propriety, as to represent Mrs. Stirling as oddly owning her anxiety to get into the boots of her auditors, and, through them, into their pockets, may fairly be adjudged guilty of being too

intent upon honouring the toasts to be capable of doing justice to the speeches.

Mr. Disraeli, telling the men of Bucks it was not his habit to swagger, or to use ambiguous words in the streets, found himself accredited with assuring his constituents it was not his habit to stagger and use big words in the streets; when he said, "individuals may form communities, but it is institutions alone that create nations," he was set down as saying, "individuals may form committees, but it is institutions alone that create nations;" and a London paper puzzled its readers not a little by making the same master-speaker responsible for "A grand writer of antiquity, perhaps the finest, has recorded his conviction in Divine Providence, and his belief in universal toleration in the passage: 'Ego men oun rai tanta kai ta pant aei phaskoim an anthropoisi makanon theous oto de me pad estin en gnome pthila keinos t'keina stengeto kado tade.'" This was almost as bad as fathering upon Mr. Lowe the perverting of "Man from beast by words is known," into "Man from beastly words is known." To be unacquainted with Pope, however, is perhaps meritorious, since it has been lately discovered that the literary idol of England's Augustan age was no poet, or, at the best, a very bad one—a discovery as marvellous, in its way, as the geographical one of the Berlin journalist who kindly supplemented a relation of the wreck of the Schiller with the information that the Scilly Islands were a not very well known group in the South Sea, between Cook's Archipelago and the Society Islands; and proceeded to calculate the probabilities for and against assistance being forthcoming to the shipwrecked people from the neighbouring Tahiti, a port at which most European vessels call on their way home from America. A gazetteer might be as serviceable to our German friend as a study of the earlier works of Bishop Colenso would be beneficial to the vigorous arithmetician who recorded that the London School Board divided upon a certain question with the following extraordinary result: "For the amendment, fifteen; against it, eleven—majority against the amendment, three." A division being taken upon the original motion, the numbers come out quite as oddly, there being "For the motion, seventeen; against it, six—majority for the motion, eighteen."

The shooting of a wild cat by a boy five feet eight inches long; the erection of a

school-building, large enough to accommodate four hundred pupils four stories high; and the fact of a man receiving a wound in the head, two inches long and some feet deep, and living to give evidence against the ruffian who "knifed" him, tell strongly against the notion that man has degenerated in size or endurance. But he would appear to have lost in gallantry if assault and battery can be justified on the ground that the passenger fortunate enough to secure the seat nearest a railway-carriage window has a right to "shut up the widows," whenever he feels so disposed; and if an Irishman is to be extolled as a hero for rushing into a burning school-house, and kicking out three widows, preliminary to throwing the children to the crowd below. That a good deal of anatomy was found in the body of a lady, about whose death there was something suspicious, is probable enough, although it would have been more to the purpose if the doctors had found a good deal of antimony; and as ladies were present upon the occasion, "objects of virtue," in all likelihood, figured among the curiosities on view at a Temperance conversazione. Elsewhere we read of two Jewish rabbits attending a public meeting; of three unfortunates biting the dust as their ship went down with them; of a Scotch sheriff awarding compensation to the tenants of Murtley Home Farm for damage done to their corps by the landlord's game; and of the friends of a once respectable woman guilty of defrauding charitable folks, urging in mitigation, that she had been for some days "sadly under the influence of chlorodyne." Doubting may be, as Lady Dunder says, mean and mechanical; nevertheless, we doubt if ever "the Holborn wood pavement was brought before the Board of Works;" a factory lad shaved to death in Lancashire; or a live surgeon caught in the Thames, and sold to the inhabitants at sixpence a pound. Spite of the feats of Miss Beckwith and Miss Parker, we discredit the story told of the foundering of an American schooner, when "the captain swam ashore, as did the female cook also, she being insured for fifteen thousand dollars, and heavily laden with iron;" and our faith in Darwinism is too limited for us to give credence to a modern instance of the development of species, chronicled in a West African journal, a year or two back:—"Roger J. Golsworthy, who went from here about

three months ago, upon a mission from Captain Glover, to Ibadan, has become a magic-lantern."

The ubiquitous news-collector who lives upon calamities comes in for many a sneer for parading the over-worn stock phrases of his craft. What else is he to do?

Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,
Figures pedantic,

are not for his humble pen. No editor would brook an infringement of Our Special Correspondent's prerogative. No "penny-a-liner," all forgetful of Morphæus, dared liken the Khedive's sleeping-cabin to a temple of Momus, or, grow eloquent upon the interment of "the last surviving marshal of the Empire" in the "consecrated twilight of Westminster Abbey," ignoring the fact that Sale's deliverer left two marshals behind him, and was not the sort of man to allow anyone to bury him while he was a surviving one. It is not often the penny-a-liner has a chance of showing what is in him, but we fancy we get a fair taste of his quality in the following bit from an account of the anniversary dinner of a Foresters' Court: "The usual hospitable and ample catering of seasonable and substantial sustenances, with true English successions, met the approbation of those who take Lincoln green as an emblem to emulate fraternity, providential motives, and true sociality, making the advent of each emulating annual an oasis in the prospective, in the advancing history of the Court."

In America, the reporter is a chartered libertine, licensed to misuse old words and manufacture new ones at discretion; free to be grandiloquent, funny, or slangy, at his own wild will. He is great at fires. This is his way of describing the burning of a grocery store: "The steam and hand engines rushed to the scene of the conflagration, but it was too late. The flames enveloped the entire structure, the Doric columns were tottering to their fall, the iron balconies were melting, the noble buttresses were a heap of ruins, and the French plate-glass in the magnificent windows was cracked and twisted by the fervent heat. The blaze roared through the halls, and the Mau- resque ceilings, the jewelled chandeliers, the purple-velvet tapestry, succumbed to the furious element; at last the roof fell in, the heavy walls fell out, and nothing was left of the majestic pile but its ruins, reminding the beholder of the ancient

palaces that line the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Nile." When the wall of a burning bank came down with a crash we are told that, "the fire-fiend danced with malignant joy in and about the rear portions of the stores and offices;" and when a similar fate threatened an Oswego home-stead, "the red flames danced in the heavens, and flung their fiery arms about like a black funeral pall, until Sam Jones got on the roof and doused them with a pail of water." Down Iowa way the appearance of a news-paragraph beginning, "Yesterday morning winter and spring kissed each other in the sunrise, and each spread its choicest favours on the purple air," evoked a report that the journalist had just popped the question successfully, while a counter statement attributed the poetic burst to the author's having been bitten a week before by a dog, "the exact condition of the animal not being known at the time." Taste in Iowa inclined rather towards the brief and suggestive style of reporting, of which we have two good examples in—"The deceased, though a bank director, is generally believed to have died a Christian, and was much respected while living;" and "There was no regular trial in the case of John Flanders, yesterday. He had an interview in the woods with a few friends, and it is perfectly certain that John will never burgle any more."

If Lord Brougham really entrapped the newspapers into satisfying his curious desire to know what friends and foes would say of him after death, he deserved to meet the listener's proverbial fate. People of sufficient note to claim gratuitous obituary notice need not, however, be in any hurry to deceive the gentlemen of the press; they are ready enough to deceive themselves, and not at all compunctions about anticipating the end of public characters. Acting upon the principle:

If a man won't let us know
That he's alive, he's dead, or should be so;
they killed Livingstone over and over again,
long ere man's cruelty to man ceased to
vex the great-hearted traveller's soul. One
morning the Standard announced, "with
regret," the death of Eliza Cook. The
Daily News thereupon followed suit with
the information that "the once popular
poetess," after suffering under softening of
the brain for a long time, and recently
from slight paralysis, had breathed her
last at Deptford, where she had been living
under the care of a female friend, appointed

by the Commissioners of Lunacy to the charge. Nothing doubting this, some two thousand people flocked to the funeral, a few of the lady's more enthusiastic admirers forcing the church doors, that they might have the gratification of touching her pall; while Miss Cook, at least "the" Miss Cook, was enjoying the best of health at Wimbledon, in happy ignorance of what had befallen her Deptford double. It was but the other day that his golden wedding was celebrated by a nobleman, who, months before, had been laid in the family vault by the newspapers; and, let us confess it frankly, the writer of the article on the Suez Canal, which appeared in *ALL THE YEAR ROUND* a month ago, talked of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe moving uneasily in his grave two or three days after that nobleman had, in a letter to the *Times*, sufficiently demonstrated the fact of his continued presence among the living.

The late senatorial elections in Paris afford another curious instance, for the *Daily Telegraph* described M. Louis Blanc as looking as fresh as a boy, and slipping playfully under a rail in the voting-room, while, according to the *Daily News*, the great little Republican had to be carried to the scene of action, racked and tortured with rheumatism, on a litter. Still further to complicate this apparently simple matter, the litter becomes in the *Illustrated London News* a bath-chair!

To speak the painful truth, the art of making news is cultivated much too sedulously nowadays. Thanks to the unflagging invention of the clever but ever-ready writers, who "do" columns of tittle-tattle for the London weeklies, and London letters for country newspapers, it is our own fault if we do not know a great deal more about princes and princesses, ministers and men of fashion, authors and actors—in short, everybody who is anybody—than they know themselves!

GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,
AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," &c. &c.

BOOK II. CHAPTER VI. AUDREY'S NARRATIVE.
UNCONSIDERED TRIFLES OF THE PAST.

"AFTER the pleasant beginning of our acquaintance already related, I saw a good deal of Madeleine Kindersley. I visited her in an unceremonious fashion at Beech Lawn, which was not too far off for my active walking powers; and she came,

whenever the fancy took her, to the Dingle House. We were widely different, but we got on very well together, and her father evidently liked this association for Madeleine. His mind was easy about her, and he needed ease on that side of it, for as time went on it became plain enough that his only son caused him nothing but grief and disquiet. He did not take to the banking business; he had neither taste nor energy for any professional career. The share he was to inherit in the profits of Kindersley and Conybeare's would be enough for him in the future, and his father had not strength of mind to refuse to give him more money than was good for him in the present. Clement Kindersley was frequently away from home, and I know those absences were a relief to his father, who suffered about him always, but suffered less when Clement did not parade his dissipation, indifference, and disrespect openly before him.

"I confided my hopes and expectations about my uncle and my cousin to Madeleine, and she became vividly interested in the subject. Concerning London, that far-away city of delights, she knew almost as little as myself, for she had never accompanied her mother on her annual visits thither; and with Paris her acquaintance was of the superficial kind that a school-girl's would naturally be. Still she had seen fine buildings, and gay crowds—things out of my cognisance altogether; and her experience was a great advantage in my eyes.

"Only on one point was there any reticence on my part towards Madeleine Kindersley. I did not impart to her the little scheme respecting Griffith and his beautiful cousin—I had made up my mind that Ida was to be beautiful—which had occurred to Miss Minnie Kellett and myself. It was more of a vision than a scheme, and was certainly woven rather by fancy than by calculation; but I instinctively kept it to myself.

"My father liked Madeleine very much. She was shy of him at first; and one day she divulged to me, causing me profound astonishment by the revelation, that he had the name of being 'a little odd' in the neighbourhood. I suppose his home-loving quiet ways, and his inveterate habit of reading, which most of the people about would be very likely to regard as a disease, had laid him open to this imputation. It took me aback very much. My sensations reminded me of those which I had experienced as a child, when I heard baldness

spoken of as a defect! Why, my father was bald! Odd, or not odd, Madeleine thought my father very kind and very pleasant, and he took pains to be so to her. Without the slightest shade of either jealousy or mortification accompanying the discovery, I found that my father could make a sort of companion of Madeleine, whereas he never thought of me in that light at all; that her gentle ways, soft movements, and quiet, interested intelligence suited him much better than my quick, noisy demeanour, and brusque, somewhat blundering manner of expressing myself.

"Madeleine Kindersley was not, I think, a girl whom people would have called, off-hand, decidedly clever; she was rather highly intelligent and appreciative, and so moved and governed by her affections, that it was enough for her to love anyone to lead her to apply her mind to the subjects which interested that person. Beyond a girl's liking for a pretty bouquet to carry in her hand, or a bowl of fresh roses to stand on her work-table, I do not think she had any special taste for flowers when I knew her first; but after a while she began to learn about them from her father and my father, and to take the liveliest interest in the gardens, which formed Mr. Kindersley's chief recreation at Beech Lawn, and the very humble collection of flower-beds that sufficed for my father's pleasure at the Dingle House. She had not previously had her attention directed to bees; but, when she found that I was interested in those curious insects, and the proprietor of a row of bee-hives—which would be utterly condemned in the present state of knowledge and cultivation of apiculture, but were very neat things of their kind in those days—she turned her attention to bees; she visited the hives, she read about the bees, much more extensively than I could be persuaded to do; she came to me frequently with some new and interesting bit of information concerning them. It was the same with everything in which Madeleine's intelligence was enlisted through the agency of her feelings; she became at once 'thorough' in it, where I was perfectly contented with half measures, or a bit-and-scrap line of action. And yet she was quite free from the dogmatism and the self-complacency which so often impair the worth and the beauty of 'thorough' in the characters of men and women. Hers was a nicely-balanced nature; nothing in it traversed

or overset that incomparable characteristic, sweetness—the dominant note where all was harmony.

"Of that important member of the household, Mrs. Frost, Miss Kindersley made a speedy and complete conquest. If, at first, I had been inclined to resent Frosty's total indifference to the fact that I was grown up, I had sufficient sense to get over that grievance in the satisfaction which I derived from discussing with the faithful old woman everything which came into my life in the altered forms of it, and every indication of its further modifications. Frosty approved of Madeleine on her own account, and also as a welcome alternative to and corrective of Miss Minnie Kellett, of whom she had, if not a dislike, at least a distaste, of the kind which I have frequently observed to be entertained by very honest and downright persons of the lower classes, towards people whose position in life is in any way dubious or undefined. The dislike of the Irish peasant to the 'half-sir' is not stronger, or more instinctive, than the dislike of the Saxon peasant, or working-class individual, to the uncomfortable people who have seen better days, and are demi-semi-gentlefolk. Of all the specimens of that order of beings whom I have ever known, Miss Minnie Kellett was the most harmless; but that did not matter—Frosty never took to her. She objected to her ringlets, her lisp, her flimsy gowns, her bonnets, and her slight boots. She objected to her sentimentality, her gush, and her laugh. She considered that they were 'upsetting,' and upsettingness was the one thing which Frosty was wont to declare she could not 'bear,' though, in practice, there were other things of which she was equally intolerant. Madeleine was the delight of the dear old woman's life, and the theme of her constant praise. She had shown a discriminating interest in the poultry-yard from the first, and had not been at the Dingle House half-a-dozen times before she knew the names of all the hens and chickens, and even their respective ages—when the Duchess might be expected to sit, and the number of Lady Mary's last hatch. It was by her sympathy and adaptability in small ways of this kind, in which there was not the smallest trace of calculation, but the most perfect sincerity, that Madeleine Kindersley swiftly and readily won all hearts.

"With one exception—an exception in-

expressibly provoking to me—there was some unaccountable prejudice against her, or objection to her, on the part of my brother; at least, I could not but think so, when I observed that the intimacy, into which my father's and my own first acquaintance with Madeleine rapidly ripened, did not extend to Griffith.

"My brother and Madeleine Kindersley met tolerably often. When she came to the Dingle House, in the daytime, Griffith was, of course, at the bank; but we had evening meetings, and my brother and myself were occasionally invited to Beech Lawn, when he and Madeleine sang together, as on the first occasion. At first, I could see that Griffith felt a little uncomfortable about these invitations. They were quite novel in his experience, and he did not exactly know how to reconcile them with the relative positions of himself and Mr. Kindersley. My father's never visiting at Beech Lawn did not count in the matter—he never visited formally anywhere, or informally, except at Despard Court. Even then, it generally happened that Lady Olive Despard espied him walking under the beeches and the elms, for which the Court was famous, and, waylaying him, beguiled him into the house. But there was a little awkwardness to Griffith, which not his own intimacy with Clement Kindersley, or the friendship subsisting between their respective fathers, could overcome. It had reference to Mr. Finlay, his 'senior,' who was never seen at Beech Lawn, with whom Mr. Kindersley was never heard to exchange any but the briefest and most exclusively business-like communications. I found out that my brother thought it rather odd that such a distinction should be made—for Mr. Finlay was a gentleman by birth and education—and I said something about it to Madeleine one day.

"'Why, what a funny notion,' she answered, laughing; 'I thought you all must know about Mr. Finlay. It would be perfectly useless for anyone to try to get him out of his shell. I have no doubt papa would be as kind as possible to him, now'—(she blushed, guiltily, at the emphasis she had laid upon the word, which meant, since the termination of her mother's rule at Beech Lawn)—'but it would only make him wretched. The only amusements in life he cares about are fishing and playing the flute; and he likes to do both quite alone. I wonder Mr. Dwarris has not found out that much

about him, though it is just like what papa says of him, that he should not have disclosed even his principal peculiarities to the person whom he sees every day. I assure you it is entirely for his own satisfaction that he is left out of account.'

"Though they sang together, and consulted about their songs, and enjoyed companionship of that kind, as only musical people do enjoy the indulgence of their common taste, there was something in Griffith's manner, in the mere fact that he never set going any of my exuberant talk about Beech Lawn and its inmates, which made me feel that he liked the state of things less than I expected. He had a wise way with him sometimes, which I did not quite like. It was not a young man's way, I used to think, but savoured of those horrid things to which everybody must come, but would like to come as slowly as possible—middle-age and experience.

"Madeleine Kindersley possessed, among the other good things which adorned her life, a very pretty pony-carriage, in which she drove a sleek, sagacious iron-grey pony, called Cutchy. It was her kind practice to call for me at the Dingle House two or three times a week, and take me with her on shopping expeditions to Wrottesley, or nice drives in the neighbourhood; and it was on the occasion of his hearing me tell Frosty that I should wait to get something I wanted from the draper's, until I could avoid walking into the town, by going in Miss Kindersley's pony-carriage, that Griffith gave the first spoken intimation of his discontent.

"'I hope you are not getting lazy,' he said. 'You seem to me to be afraid to tire yourself now, by a walk you used to think nothing at all about.'

"'I'm not a bit lazy,' I answered, pettishly, 'and I have plenty of walking about here, and I never used to walk to Beech Lawn before, which I do now, very often. Why I should drag along that horrid, dirty Wrottesley-road, with mud up to my ankles, instead of going comfortably in Miss Kindersley's pony-carriage, I really cannot understand. But, I don't know how it is, Griffith, you never seem to like my being with Madeleine.'

"'What put such an idea as that into your head?'

"'Oh, nothing in particular; only you are never quite pleasant about it.'

"'Pure imagination, Audley.'

"'Nothing of the sort. You are awfully

wise and old-headed, but I know what you mean, though I may not know why you mean it, and you don't like Madeleine Kindersley.'

"Griffith walked quickly away from me, for a few paces; we were on the lawn, and I saw that I had really annoyed him. Presently he returned, and said to me, in his serious way :

" 'Do not be so foolish, Audrey. Why on earth should you imagine that I do not like Miss Kindersley? I suppose I'm not bound to go into fits about your friends. What I don't like, and what really does make me uneasy, is the fact that this new intimacy, and the change in your life it has led to, may induce you to acquire tastes and habits which you will not be able to gratify or sustain. It would be a serious error if you were to forget the distance which divides you and Miss Kindersley.'

" 'Really, Griffith,' I replied, with some heat, 'I don't see that the difference between us is so very important. Madeleine is no better born or bred than I am; and if you think I am going to be either extravagant or discontented because she has a fine house, and a carriage, and ten new gowns to my one, I must say you have a poor opinion of me. What have I ever done that you should set me down as being so silly and so vulgar? Why did you not think I must be utterly spoilt by the honour of associating with Lady Olive Despard?'

" 'Come, come, Audrey,' said my brother, giving me an exasperatingly confidential little push, 'you know quite well that is a very different thing; you are not likely to be put out of your place by Lady Olive. And if there were any such danger you would not go in the way of it. How often has she asked you to dine with her, and have you found out that you couldn't possibly?'

" I had nothing to say to this; so I turned sullen, and went into the house, making up my mind that Miss Minnie Kellett was right in her doctrine that all men, even the best among them, have a little corner of contrariety about them, and love to oppose the views and opinions of their womankind just purely for opposition's sake.

" The very next day Madeleine came in the pony-carriage, and we set off together, attended by the staid and decorous groom, who was especially attached to the service of Cutchy, and who was accustomed to interfere with grave effectiveness in the interests of that fortunate animal, whenever

he perceived that Miss Kindersley's driving displayed any of the vices of that accomplishment, as practised by ladies. He had much respect for his young mistress on general grounds, but he admitted no nice distinctions in his unwavering belief that women never can keep their whips quiet, or resist 'fretting' a horse, that they know nothing at all of the qualities and facilities of roads, and invariably pull in or let out their horses at the wrong point of the hill. Madeleine and I would have preferred to dispense with the ministrations of James Bruce, but that was not permitted. We would have unhesitatingly entrusted ourselves to the discretion of Cutchy, but nothing would have induced James Bruce to entrust Cutchy to ours. I believe he regarded the elderly coachman, who had acted in that capacity to Mr. and Mrs. Kindersley since their wedding-day, with envy, chiefly because 'his' horses—a fat, steady, pompous pair they were—had no female interference to fear, or, as he expressed it, 'no woman don't meddle wi' his coach-box.'

" Madeleine was looking remarkably pretty that day. There was a wonderful soft bloom upon her sweet face, and her steady, crystal-clear eyes were dew-bright.

" 'What do you think?' she said, when I had taken my place beside her, and we were driving off with Bruce's invariable warning about the sharp turning in our unheeding ears. 'What do you think? Lord Barr has sent papa some wonderful seeds from his Java collection, and Mr. Lester knows all about them. He came out to breakfast this morning, and gave papa a quantity of information.'

" 'Lord Barr? I thought he was not here just now?'

" 'No, no; Mr. Lester. I had no idea he was so nice. I rather hate doctors. He's very good-looking, too, don't you think so?'

" 'Yes; much better looking than Lord Barr; and he has a grander way with him, too.'

" 'Why shouldn't he?' said Madeleine—she was called to order just then by James Bruce for the objectionable activity of her whip; 'he has an honourable profession, and works hard at it, doing good to lots of people; while Lord Barr, I suppose, has never been of any use to anyone, or done anything except amuse himself in his life. All that travelling about, you know, was only just for pleasure. I hate rich men and idle men, don't you, Audrey?'

"I replied with a hearty affirmative, and we pleased ourselves with the notion that we were decidedly radical in our opinions. For our precipitate judgment of Lord Barr we had not any grounds whatever; and it was exceedingly unjust; for the brother of Lady Olive Despard was neither idle nor rich.

"We drove on, and did our shopping at Wrottesley, without meeting any one of importance and interest, and, Madeleine having an appointment with her local dressmaker, I betook myself to the Lipscotts, where Madeleine, who had enlarged her borders in the way of visiting to an extent which would have astonished and horrified her mother, promised to join me.

"The tone in which the comely maid who opened the door to me—that 'private door' which Mrs. Lipscott and her daughters abhorred, because of its fatal reminder of the 'office' entrance—replied: 'Yes, miss, the ladies are all at home, miss,' suggested to me that something new and pleasant was in progress. I asked no question of course, but soberly ascended the solid, wide, well-carpeted staircase—whose carved oak balustrades had as much sturdy timber in them as would supply the whole wood-work of a modern contract-built house—to the handsome sitting-room, whose furniture and fittings excited Frosty's envy to an extent which she dissembled in grumbling and indignation.

"It was a very comfortable room under its most ordinary aspect—warm, well-filled, well-proportioned, well-lighted, and thoroughly habitable; and the comfortably prosperous look, which was the leading characteristic of the Lipscott ladies, harmonised admirably with it. They were all there when I entered the room, the mother and the three daughters, and their four comely faces were full of an unaccustomed and smiling content.

"Had Mrs. Delamere called upon them? Had Lady Olive Despard extended to them the honour of her acquaintance? Had Mr. Lipscott announced an intention to retire from business, and put a few miles of country road between them and the town? All these questions passed through my mind before I had made two steps within the door.

"I was very warmly received. Mrs. Lipscott even went the unusual length of kissing me, and Caroline and Fanny, the second and third of the girls, were quite kittenish in their gamboling salutations.

"'Oh, you dear thing, how nice of you to come,' said Caroline, as she placed me in the corner of one of the softest, springiest, cosiest sofas I ever sat upon, 'and just as Fanny and I were saying that we really must manage to go and see you somehow; though it is so difficult when there is so much to be done and thought about.'

"'Yes, indeed,' said Fanny, 'we were talking about you not ten minutes ago, weren't we, ma?'

"This was a family custom with the Lipscott girls. They all said, 'Weren't we, ma?' or, 'Didn't we, ma?' or, 'Haven't we, ma?' on every occasion, accordingly as the question suited; and though the iteration was perhaps tiresome, one could not quite dislike it, because it had in it so true an indication of the perfectly good terms on which the mother and her girls lived.

"Adelaide, the eldest, was less effusive in her welcome of me than the others; but the smiles of the mother and the sisters were reflected in her face, with the addition of a very becoming blush. I had always liked Adelaide Lipscott, notwithstanding her little sillinesses, but I had never thought her pretty until that day. Pretty she undoubtedly looked now, however, as she stood at a little distance from me, with her head bent, her cheeks flushed, and her fingers playing with her watch-chain; and a good half-dozen years younger than she had looked a little while ago—even so little a while ago as that Christmas party, at which I had seen Captain Simcox 'quite near,' for the first time, and experienced a dispersion of my illusions in consequence.

"'You are all very kind,' said I, 'as you always are, and I wish I could have come sooner, but a hundred things prevented me. But do tell me, dear Mrs. Lipscott, what has happened? Something has, I can see; and it's something good and pleasant, and I'm dying to hear it.'

"I do not know which of them told me the news, I only know it was not Adelaide—indeed I think Mrs. Lipscott, Caroline, and Fanny all told me simultaneously—but in another moment I was in possession of the cause of the smiles which adorned every face, beginning with the comely maid's. Captain Simcox had proposed, only the preceding day, to Adelaide Lipscott, and she had accepted him. The engagement was not much over twenty-four hours old, but news was a precious article at Wrottesley in those days, and the interesting fact was already tolerably

well known. If I had chanced to see Miss Minnie Kellett, for instance, before I went to the Lipscocks, she would certainly have taken the edge off direct intelligence from its most legitimate quarter.

"What a blessing you didn't go in with Miss Kindersley at that gossiping Rooke's," said Fanny Lipscott, with edifying seriousness, as beffited the acknowledgment of a providential interference; "she's sure to have heard of it, and we should have lost the pleasure of telling you ourselves. Are you very much surprised?"

"I jumped up and kissed Adelaide.

"No, and yes," I answered; "I am surprised, because I am such a stupid goose about such things, that I did not think of it; and I'm not surprised, because I'm sure nothing could exceed his attention that night of your party. I did see that, though it was my first party, and I never, to my knowledge, was in the room with anyone who was in love before. But, though I can't make up my mind as to whether I am surprised or not, I am perfectly sure that I am delighted. Captain Simcox, too! How odd it seems, after all the talk we have had about him."

"Oh yes," said Fanny, eagerly, "and how awfully grand we used to think him; and now he's going to be only our brother-in-law, and we shall not mind him a bit."

"And when is the wedding to be?" was my next question, put with a directness which showed that in social matters I was still "remarkably young."

"Adelaide laughed, and looked at her mother, who said:

"Well, dear, we don't quite know; you see they have only been engaged since yesterday, and nothing is settled yet."

"Oh yes, ma, dear," said Caroline, who had wedged herself into the sofa beside me, and had a tight hold of my hand; "we've settled one thing, and that is, that Miss Dwarris is to be a bridesmaid. You will, won't you, dear?"

"Adelaide followed up the request of her more impulsive sister in the properest manner, and I, to whom the mere idea of officiating in such a novel and delightful character was dazzling; had just said that nothing could give me greater pleasure, if my father did not object, when the door

opened, and Madeleine Kindersley, followed by Captain Simcox, came in.

"A glance at Madeleine's face told me that she had heard the news at Miss Rooke's; and then I was a little amused at the awkwardness of the situation—awkwardness to Adelaide Lipscott and Captain Simcox, I mean, for the other two girls and their mother were wholly unembarrassed, and called the future son and brother-in-law 'Freddy' with perfect ease. Captain Simcox carried off the position very well, explained that he had met Miss Kindersley at the door, spoke to me for a few moments, and then addressed his fiancée with a very good grace. Madeleine and I did not make a long visit to the happy family, each member of which seemed to take the fact of Adelaide's engagement as a personal boon. Mrs. Lipscott left the room with us when we took leave, and assured me, on the landing, that she should never have desired anything better than what had befallen for her dear Adelaide.

"Her papa"—this was the first time Mr. Lipscott had been mentioned—"would have liked more money. I don't mind telling you that, my dear, because I know it will go no further." (The same communication was made to every acquaintance the good lady possessed.) "But I say, let there be love and lineage, and the rest may take care of itself. And there's love and lineage here. Oh yes! the Irish Simcoes—the Simcoes of Carlow—a very old family, and most highly connected. Good-bye, and mind you come soon to hear all Adelaide's plans."

"I should probably have remembered the day on which the first wedding with which I had any concern was announced to me, if there had been no other association with it which marked it in my life; but there was another association. The spring had begun, and we were looking for news from Mr. Pemberton. The news arrived by the evening post on that same day.

"It was I who took the letter from the postman, recognised it by the post-mark, and brought it to my father. It did not, however, resemble the first letter, for it was black-bordered, and the address was written in a woman's hand."

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